

May 2005



STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Internal Communique ■ State Schools for Severely Handicapped

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State Schools for
Severely Handicapped
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The Results of the REACH Program

by Barbara Stevens and Merv Blunt

This year a new project was launched to promote the vision of State Schools — REACH. Our vision is to provide quality education through:

Respect for all students' ability to learn.

Effective teaching practices matched to student needs.

Achievement of educational priorities.

Creativity to motivate student learning.

High expectations that all students can learn.

Twenty-eight teachers volunteered to participate in this project and they made a commitment to follow the vision of REACH. Many others, including teachers not directly involved in the project, also embraced this vision. Through the efforts of the teachers and support from supervisors for instruction and administration, many new and exciting learning outcomes were achieved.

After the implementation of REACH, we asked the participants if the project was beneficial and whether it should be continued. A questionnaire was sent to the participants (building administrators, teachers, supervisors for instruction and area directors). Based on the responses received, the REACH project has been successful with students becoming more engaged in their learning and experiencing learning as fun. As one teacher stated, "Previously, we seemed to do things *for* or *to* kids and now we're doing things *with* kids."

At the end of the fourth training session, a survey of the project was conducted. There was very little difference in the ratings between teachers, building administrators, and administration (supervisors for instruction and area directors). The results from the survey indicate the percent of staff that either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with each statement.

(continued on page 2)

Survey Results

	Teachers	Building Administrators	Supervisors for Instruction and Area Directors
1. The building administrator sets clear instructional expectations for the staff by conducting the REACH training in the schools.	92%	100%	83%
2. The effective teaching practices presented in the training will have a positive effect on student achievement.	95%	96%	100%
3. Using the curriculum this year provided a better understanding of why there is a need for a curriculum and the expectations for learning outcomes.	77%	83%	100%
4. The REACH project was valuable and should continue next year.	77%	81%	(not surveyed)

Results of REACH

(continued from page 1)

As a result of participation in REACH, teachers indicated they approached instruction differently. The three areas reported were:

- Sensory integration is used more for “getting ready to learn skills,” as well as, behavior support. There is a greater appreciation for the impact sensory integration has on learning for all students.
- More planning of instruction and using a variety of teaching methods in small group instruction.
- More focus on a teaching progression, teaching essential skills and creating more motivating learning environments.

The building administrators also observed positive changes in teachers approach to instruction. They reported more teachers:

- Have confidence, a sense of pride and are taking on more responsibilities in the school and interacting with staff.
- Understand the difference between skills and activities that lead to more educationally relevant IEPs.
- Develop and use more task analysis with IEP goals.
- Recognize the need for instructional adaptations and know how to create them.

As another result of participating

in REACH, teachers reported the three most common learning outcomes for student achievement were:

- Improving student learning by integration sensory diets and using sensory.
- More active student participation in their learning and in more enjoyable learning environments.
- More time to teach by providing more structure to the students’ daily routine.

The most successful methods used by building administrators to provide technical support as a catalyst for change were:

- Using the collaborative approach and finding ways for the building administrator, supervisor for instruction and teacher to discuss student learning needs.
- Providing support by making teaching materials for the teacher, or creating ways to give the teacher time to plan instructional strategies.
- Using the learning pyramid with the teacher to understand the whole picture of the student’s learning needs and to obtain a more global understanding of the student’s skills, abilities and interests.

While there were many positive student outcomes reported as a result of using the principles from the REACH project, there were challenges that were also reported. The most frequent comments were:

Teachers

- Finding time to prepare instruction materials, paperwork, and time management skills.
- Separating the difference between EID and REACH.
- Absorbing the amount of information covered and applying the skills.

Building Administrators

- Finding time to provide technical support, meeting with the team, observing, and conducting training.
- Knowing whether the expectations are being met, getting others to “buy into” the teaching progression concept, and understanding the expectations of the assignments from one training to another.

Another component of the survey asked participants how REACH could be improved and what should be the focus of the content. All of the comments will have a direct impact on how REACH is constructed for the next school year. This will be announced at the start of the 2005-2006 school year. The dedication and commitment of all staff to “reach” our vision is greatly appreciated. After the successes recognized this year from REACH, we can hardly wait to see what next year brings!

Contact the assistant superintendent to obtain a copy of all the comments received in the survey. ♦

Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls in the Workplace

by Claudia Rampley, Central Office

Nationally, 10 percent of all injuries are caused by slips, trips and falls. According to OSHA, they cause 15 percent of all accidental deaths, second only to motor vehicles.

In offices and schools many accidents are caused by slippery floors, spilled liquids, objects lying on the floor or protruding into aisles, poorly maintained floor surfaces or open drawers. With a little care many of these accidents could be avoided.

Here are a few helpful hints:

- ✓ Immediately clean up spills – post signs/cones to warn of slippery areas.
 - ✓ Turn on lights before entering a dark room.
 - ✓ Pick-up all pencils, paperclips, paper, etc., from floor surfaces.
 - ✓ Report loose carpeting or damaged flooring to the building supervisor.
 - ✓ Hallways/walkways are free from obstruction, properly maintained and well lit.
 - ✓ Avoid carrying/pushing objects too large to see where you are going.
 - ✓ While seated, do not tilt chair back on two legs.
 - ✓ Do not run cords across doorways, aisles or hallways.
 - ✓ Do not stand or play in swivel chairs.
 - ✓ Do not raise seat on a swivel chair where your feet don’t touch floor.
 - ✓ Slow down – don’t walk fast.
 - ✓ Do not leave drawers open.
 - ✓ Wear appropriate shoes.
 - ✓ Use the handrail on stairs.
- Safety plays an important role in your daily life. Follow these tips and limit your risks of injury from slips, trips and falls. ♦

Implementing REACH

We asked teachers and building administrators to give us some perspectives on the REACH trainings and their outcomes in the school and classrooms.

Nola Kramer, Principal
E.W. Thompson and Prairie View State Schools

This year we had the opportunity to reconfigure how we:

- Conduct staffings and prepare for IEP meetings.
- Complete re-evaluations.
- Share instruction and professional communication with aides and therapists.
- Communicate and collaborate with LEAs and their representatives.
- Develop and document weekly/daily instruction.
- Design professional development activities.

Next year we will be continuing changes, but with a wider, more inclusive scope.

One of the most exciting possibilities is the opportunity to develop focused, meaningful training and professional development activities for teachers and aides, both individually and as classroom teams. Increasing “ownership” of the process can only support implementation of effective practices identified this year.

While enhancing classroom leadership abilities of teachers is important, this period of transition can provide new ways for aides and therapists to contribute ideas and expertise for improving instruction. My personal goals for next year are to structure a regular cycle of targeted training, documentation practices and evaluation designed to embed everyone’s ideas into everyday practice.

Marsha Riney, Teacher
New Dawn State School

- REACH training has encouraged me to do more small group and

whole class instruction. We do less pullout instruction and I have become much better at embedding skills into activities.

- We no longer do traditional individual seatwork that is typically thought of as “prevocational” — sorting, collating, packaging, etc.
- When I select materials for purchase, I evaluate them for versatility and multiple uses.
- Students are interacting with each other more and advocating for themselves and for each other. The students are much more excited about school and motivated to participate.
- We have worked closely with OT, PT, and Speech Therapists to integrate their expertise into the daily routine. This has resulted in a much freer exchange of ideas and an empowerment of classroom staff. We have all become much more creative.
- My classroom aides have become more familiar with the curricular areas and how skills fit into those areas.
- By using the Curriculum Guide, I have found it easier to target essential skills and to write really functional present levels of educational performance.

Teresa Neumeyer, Principal
New Dawn State School

REACH training has provided a wonderful opportunity for teachers, building administrators, supervisors for instruction and area directors to network and focus solely on student achievement strategies. Students have learned to work together to complete activities rather than working independently for extended periods on sorting or other tasks. Students have so many more opportunities to practice and learn. The atmosphere has been very positive. I am especially appreciative of the commitment by our program to provide training and

opportunities for follow-through. I genuinely believe this process will result in a more positive school experience for students and staff and will lead to greater achievement and interdependence. I can’t wait for next year!

“Change is inevitable. Adapting to change is unavoidable. It’s how you do it that sets you together or apart.”

— William Ngwako Maphoto

“Change always comes bearing gifts.”

— Price Pritchett

Eleanor Kambouris, Teacher
Ozark Horizon State School

As an experienced teacher it was refreshing to discover a renewed interest in task analysis at the REACH training workshops. When I set about determining how to teach a skill, I analyzed it by moving myself through the necessary steps, which is a process that continues to fascinate, amaze and enlighten me.

Hearing errorless learning practices described reminds me that when I begin to teach a skill to a young person, a great deal of highly intensive reteaching is necessary to embed a more functional skill sequence. That reteaching has to begin with an extended period of errorless practice.

Tina Pike, Teacher
Maple Valley State School

The REACH Training has reinforced and made more concrete the techniques used to teach specific skills. It made me think more deeply about each of my student’s weak areas and apply these techniques more readily. We, as teachers, often fall into a routine and fail to look at data closely. This training has given me the opportunity to evaluate weak areas and find a place to start with students having difficulty. ♦

Graduate Survey Results

This spring students who graduated in 2000 and 2004 from State Schools for Severely Handicapped (SSSH) were sent a survey. The survey was to gather information about their experiences in making the transition from school to adult life. A total of 110 graduates from a possible 172 responded. Information from the survey will be used to plan and improve educational services in our schools.

2005 Graduate Survey Results

Year of Graduation	2004	2000
Total number of graduates surveyed	76	96
Percentage of graduates responding	61	67
Percentage of graduates employed in:		
Sheltered Workshops	20	6
Supported Employment	0	3
Competitive Employment	4	0
Percentage of graduates attending a day program	41	25

Evaluation of the SSSH Educational Program

Graduates/parents were asked to rate each statement below.*	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Transition (Post graduation preparation)					
1. The transition plan in IEP met the graduate's needs.	28 (14)	52 (28)	7 (11)	7 (3)	0 (5)
2. The transition plan in IEP helped link the graduate to services needed after graduation from SSSH.	22 (9)	52 (30)	7 (11)	11 (5)	2 (6)
3. The transition plan in IEP helped link the graduate to placement after graduation from SSSH.	20 (9)	39 (20)	17 (22)	11 (3)	2 (6)
B. Behavior					
1. SSSH effectively managed the graduate's behaviors.	37 (19)	37 (23)	13 (14)	0 (2)	0 (3)
2. SSSH provided positive alternatives to inappropriate or challenging behaviors.	24 (17)	37 (23)	22 (16)	0 (0)	0 (5)
C. Communication					
1. The graduate's communication skills improved while attending SSSH.	35 (14)	43 (28)	15 (11)	0 (5)	0 (3)
2. The communication skills learned at SSSH are still being used by the student.	28 (13)	50 (31)	9 (8)	4 (5)	0 (5)
D. Essential Skills/Functional Skills					
1. Skills acquired at SSSH prepared the graduate for life after graduation.	15 (11)	61 (30)	17 (13)	2 (5)	0 (5)
2. Skills acquired at SSSH prepared the graduate to be as independent as possible.	20 (9)	50 (33)	17 (8)	2 (5)	0 (5)
3. The skills the graduate learned at SSSH were used in the home setting.	22 (14)	61 (27)	7 (13)	0 (2)	2 (5)
E. Implementation of the State School Curriculum					
1. The SSSH curriculum provided a focused method for developing IEP goals.	17 (13)	50 (30)	20 (13)	2 (3)	4 (3)

* The results are the percentage of respondents who checked each rating. The percentages for 2004 graduates are shown first with 2000 graduates in parentheses. Respondents did not answer every question which is why the percentages do not total 100 percent for each statement. ♦

Pancakes for Breakfast

Book Review by Susan Bonner, Supervisor for Instruction, and
Rexanna Lamb, Teacher, Gateway-Hubert Wheeler State School

By Tomie DePaola
Scholastic Books

RECENTLY, REXANNA LAMB USED THIS BOOK FOR A UNIT ON PANCAKES, incorporating the thematic approach outlines in our TEACH manual and embedding many skill areas for her primary students.

Pancakes for Breakfast is a picture book about a lady living in the country with a dog and cat. She wants to make pancakes for breakfast, but has to gather the ingredients, such as eggs from the chicken coop and milk from the cow. She churns her own butter and even walks to a neighbor's home in the snow to buy maple syrup fresh from the tree sap. When she gets home, her pets have ransacked the prepared ingredients and she cannot make pancakes. Then she smells pancakes cooking at a neighbor's home. Needless to say, she is able to enjoy pancakes with the neighbors.

Many of Ms. Lamb's students are learning to use objects and/or signs to communicate, as well as learning to match objects to pictures. The students identified food items as the story unfolded. They imitated the movements of pancake preparation, such as stirring the batter, churning the butter, milking the cow, etc.

The class lived the story by making their own pancakes. A picture recipe was developed for the students to follow when gathering ingredients and preparing the pancakes. Students helped in all steps except the actual cooking of the pancakes. The students waited and watched the cooking. They learned kitchen safety, especially not to touch hot items.

This lesson had its own reinforcement — the breakfast of pancakes. One student who is learning to match numbers counted out six place settings for the breakfast. Students practiced communicating by requesting items, such as "syrup," "butter," "more," etc. Eating and grasping skills were reinforced during the breakfast. There were smiles on every face because they had *Pancakes for Breakfast*! ♦

HUMAN RESOURCES

DESE Employee of the Month

Congratulations to Karen Wells, Supervisor for Instruction (Area 1 Office), for being named DESE's Employee of the Month for June. In the nomination form, Karen was described as being "uncompromising in her support of quality education for students with severe disabilities and having a positive and quiet impact on everyone she works besides."

Karen is now eligible for consideration for Missouri State Employee of the Year. *Good luck Karen!* ♦

Summer Paychecks

by Cheri Landers, Central Office

Employees who started at the beginning or after the start of the 2004-2005 school year will want to review their employment letters for upcoming salary adjustments. These adjustments may be made to the final paycheck(s) of this school year. The amount of the adjustments will be indicated along with the dates payroll distribution will be affected.

Employees who received a salary adjustment during this school year will want to review their adjusted letters for possible salary changes during the summer pay periods. ♦

Address Changes

by Cheri Landers, Central Office

If your address has changed, it is important to provide appropriate notification to the Central Office by completing a Supplemental Information Form. If you are employed five or more hours you will also need to complete and submit the MCHCP-M2-Enrollment/Change/Cancellation/Waiver Form and the MOSERS-CHG02-Notification of Change (Personal Information) Form if you are under the Missouri State

Employees' Retirement System. These forms are available from your building administrator and should be submitted through your area office. ♦

Maximum Annual Leave

by Cheri Landers, Central Office

Per Personnel Policies 200-210, employees cannot have an annual leave balance of more than two years worth of accrual on October 31 of each year. Excess annual leave is allowed to accumulate and carry over from pay period to pay period until October 31.

Employees need to look at their annual leave balance and project what will be accrued between now and October. If, after that projection, you will be over your maximum annual leave allowed, it is time to start planning to take some time off. Please discuss this with your supervisor before requesting annual leave. It is the responsibility of each employee to monitor annual leave balances.

When a staff member ends state employment, either by retirement or resignation, only the amount of annual leave accrued up to the maximum allowed will be paid. Any annual leave accrued over the maximum at the time of separation will be lost or can be donated to Shared Leave. ♦

Employee of the Month Nominations

The DESE Ambassador Team reviews all nominations for Employee of the Month. Any state employee may nominate a fellow employee from his/her department for the award.

If there is someone you are working with that deserves to be DESE' Employee of the Month, please contact Becky Kempker at 573-751-0399 or download the criteria and the nomination form at <http://deseintranet.dese.state.mo.us/intranet/hr/Information/Employee%20of%20Month.doc>. ♦

DESE Ambassador Awards Program

by Becky Kempker

The employees noted below have anniversaries falling in the first quarter of 2005. They were acknowledged at the DESE Ambassador's ceremony held in April 2005. Congratulations to all of these employees for their dedicated service.

5 Years Service

Eric W. Bader, *Delmar A. Cobble*
Claudine A. Bell, *Cedar Ridge*
Arki Collins, *Trails West*
Diana A. Jones, *New Dawn*
Tammy J. Jones, *Gateway*
Sandra L. Rowe, *College View*
Beverly A. Shively, *Prairie View*
Laura L. Stallmann, *Autumn Hill*

10 Years Service

Julie Y. Arnold, *Parkview*
Vickie L. Barred, *Ozark Hills*
Stepheny Bath, *College View*
Bruce A. Bryant, *Area I*
Robin L. Cachero, *Lakeview Woods*
Janna E. Cauthen, *Shady Grove*
Ada K. Hensell, *B.W. Robinson*
Debra M. Holloway, *Trails West*
Louis W. Izard, *B.W. Sheperd*
Kim E. Milburn, *Delmar A. Cobble*
Belinda G. Morrow, *New Dawn*
Cheryl R. Paige, *Special Acres*
Pauline Roslen, *New Dawn*
Nancy R. Sells, *Boonslick*
Mary L. Sykes, *Gateway*
Theresa L. Townsend, *B.W. Sheperd*
Sheila M. Woolard, *Shady Grove*
Sheila L. Zigrye, *Gateway*

15 Years Service

Kathleen J. Batts, *Autumn Hill*
Patsy R. Feldmann, *Lillian Schaper*
Carol M. Hansen, *Kirchner*

20 Years Service

Janet L. Arnold, *Current River*
Rosalie M. Donaldson, *Maple Valley*
Peggy L. Robinson, *Greene Valley*

25 Years Service

Rexanna E. Lamb, *Gateway*
Linda D. Smith, *Gateway*

30 Years Service

Dorothy M. Westbrook, *Gateway* ♦

New Dawn Variety Show

by Candy Birdsong, Teacher, New Dawn State School

The first show I coordinated for New Dawn State School was a musical with students and staff participating. The second year expanded into a variety show where students and staff could show off talents in other areas. This year we continued the variety show format.

Planning a Show

Explain to students in each classroom what a variety show is. Ask if they are interested in being a part of the show and tell them that it means they will be performing in front of an audience. Explain the other options if they are reluctant to perform. Additional help will be needed in setting up the stage, helping hold items, changing the stages, controlling the music, seating people, raising curtains and designing the program on the computer.

Those who want to perform will decide what kind of performance they would like to do. Help them explore two or three options. Determine their interest level by observing their choices made during previous school functions. Confirm with the classroom teacher that a chosen talent is an appropriate choice for the student. Discuss whether they would like to perform alone, with another person, in a small group or with a staff person.

Look at each participant's IEP goals. Once the act is decided, go back to goals and pick out those directly related to the chosen act. Physical therapists and PE teachers may help practice motor movements and dance routines. Occupational therapists will incorporate goals involving fine motor skills into preparing props, and the speech therapist often helps to choose dialogue to be used. It is truly an integrated effort by all.

Once the acts have been chosen, everyone works together on props, artwork, clothing and music. The staff is always available to help guide decisions so students don't feel bewildered or think they can't do it. Focus on letting this be the students' project. Let them have full range to create and plan so all the credit will be theirs.

The Variety of Acts

Here are some examples of the type of acts that can be included in a show:

Tool Man — A group of young adult male students demonstrated how to use tools appropriately and safely, including hammering a nail into a board and showing how to use a screwdriver. They showed how to measure and how to problem solve and decide where to make a cut to get two pieces out of one board. They illustrated

the differences in short and long and other measurement terms. All of this revolved around the IEP goals of learning new vocabulary words, completing craft/leisure projects and two and three step assembly.

Cooking for Guys — What else but two guys cooking up a "guy-type" snack? It was presented in the style of a TV commercial with two guys dressed up in cooking gear, showing their audience just how easy cooking is. This act involved the steps of planning, shopping, measuring, following a recipe and communicating the steps to others.

Alphabet Madness — Primary students practiced academics as well as reaching, movement, and motor skills as they followed directions to hold up the letters indicated by the accompanying musical selection.

Amazing Rope Trick — A student demonstrated in one swift, continuous movement how to undo a rope of knots. This act addressed behavioral supports as the student learned to use strings and ropes in an appropriate, functional way.

Guitar Man — A student performed on a guitar made with tools used to complete a two to three part assembly project and decorated during an art lesson. The student displayed communication skills as he performed.

Fashion and Style — A group of girls from the young adult classroom showed off their grooming skills as they fixed their nails, hair, and make-up and dressed up in the latest fashion.

Shout — This was a song and dance routine in which a group of young students demonstrated their imitation of movements and polished their language skills as they moved and sang (or shouted) to the music.

Colors of the Rainbow — A student demonstrated use of hand movements to music as she stood independently with no supports to complete a routine to music.

Outcomes of Talent Show

- Students become more self-assured and become less reluctant to join activities.
- Self-esteem is heightened as each student performs and is reinforced by the applause of the audience.
- Students learn that school is fun.
- The rate of student progress and achievement of IEP goals is high.

This is a joint effort of the whole school to create a fun, all-school program and to teach IEP goals through a variety of activities. Parents are invited and we always have a good turnout. Parents are often amazed at what their son or daughter is able to do. ♦

Skills Acquisition — A Unit on Responsibility

by Mary McFarland, Teacher, Ozark Hills State School

For the month of November, students at Ozark Hills State School focused on learning and demonstrating the concept of responsibility and being responsible for others as well as their own actions. We began by discussing the upcoming presidential election and what we could do to be responsible citizens. Our class voted to adopt a local nursing home and the St. James Veterans Home for the year. We decided to make cards and cookies for the two facilities on special holidays. Students were also asked to demonstrate responsible actions in the school setting.

They worked on the following skills in their IEPs, as well as meeting several curriculum standards.

- **Communication Arts:** Listening, signing, using alternative augmentative communication devices, using “eye gaze,” answering questions, and making choices.
- **Social Studies:** Word concepts of responsible, voting, election, and caring; emotions of sad and happy; turn taking; worker behavior skills of initiating, completing and requesting more work; and following directions.

■ **Fine Arts:** Appreciating several types of art materials, focusing on materials, and using materials to build upper body strength and manual dexterity.

■ **Language Arts/Literacy:** Listening to and participating in stories and games which involve learning the concept of responsibility.

■ **Health & PE:** Walking/driving to locate, get, and return lesson materials, maintaining head and trunk control, maintaining balance while stooping and standing, and leaning forward to reach for materials.

■ **Science:** Participating in technology by using a CD (focused on Veterans) and the classroom computer in a group setting.

■ **Math:** Identifying the number two when using two emotion cards, sad and happy; counting and measuring ingredients for making cookies.

The students really enjoyed a game called “What Do You Think?” The intent of the game was to teach them to identify examples of responsible citizenship in the school setting. Game phrases were read to the students and they were asked to determine if the phrase was a responsible phrase by

holding up a “happy” emotion card or an irresponsible phrase by holding up a “sad” emotion card. Students had to listen carefully, respond, and wait their turn. This game can be accessed at: www.indianastandardsresources.org/completeResource.asp?Subject=soc&Grade=K (lesson indicator K.2.4.)

For Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, students assisted in making cookies and cards for the two facilities they adopted. Patriotic colors were used for the cards and cookies, and students chose the needed materials to use. During off campus instruction, our students purchased items at Wal-Mart for making cookies. This gave them the opportunity for transfer and generalization of skills in other settings.

We are looking forward to other holidays and doing more projects for our adopted facilities. The St. James Veterans Home made certificates of appreciation for our students and staff in patriotic colors and we sent them home with students. Families were informed by letter of our class activities so they could discuss what we were doing in class with their children. ♦

STATE SCHOOLS FOR SEVERELY HANDICAPPED
Missouri Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

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Web site: dese.mo.gov/divspeced/stateschools/

NOTE: If you have items of interest for the *Staff Highlights*, please call 573-751-0706 (Missouri Relay 800-735-2966) or forward them to: Stephanie Brooks, State Schools for Severely Handicapped, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480. E-mail: Stephanie.Brooks@dese.mo.gov